

they began attacking it. All the tired, old partisan tropes were trotted out. Before releasing a proposal that wants to give schools even more reopening money than the House Democrats' bill and which would continue additional unemployment benefits at eight times the dollar amount Democrats established during the last crisis, we were informed here on the floor that "those Republican hard-right money people . . . don't want the Federal Government to help anybody."

This is beyond parody.

Republicans put forward a trillion-dollar proposal for kids, jobs, and healthcare, including direct cash to households, and even more cash to unemployed people. And the Democrats say it proves we don't want to help people. They say it proves we don't want to help people. These are not serious statements. It is politics as usual, with talking points that went stale 20 years ago.

But the week is young and the HEALS Act is full of provisions I would, frankly, dare my Democratic colleagues to actually say they oppose.

Republicans want to extend supplemental unemployment insurance at hundreds of dollars per week. If Democrats block legislation, it will stop all together.

Republicans want to send thousands of dollars more to American families through direct payments. If Democrats will not come to the table, they will get nothing.

Republicans want to use tax incentives to encourage the rehiring of laid-off workers and the creation of safer workplaces through things like testing, remodeling, and PPE. If Democrats block action, workers will be on their own.

Republicans want to specifically protect Medicare seniors from a spike in premiums because of COVID. If Democrats treat the HEALS Act the way they treated police reform, seniors will be on their own as well.

Republicans want to pour money into K-12 schools and give greater flexibility to childcare providers so America's kids can have a safe but more normal school year. If Democrats block action, school districts will get none of us.

Republicans want to create a second targeted round of PPE to keep small businesses above water. If Democrats will not negotiate, the "now open" signs will come down and the "going out of business" signs will replace them.

Republicans want to proactively expand our domestic manufacturing capability for masks and PPE and medical countermeasures. If Democrats refuse to negotiate, we will be just as dependent on adversaries as competitors in the next crisis.

Republicans want to protect doctors, nurses, school districts, and universities from a second epidemic of frivolous lawsuits. If Democrats don't come to the table, our Nation's reopening will be at the mercy of trial lawyers.

Republicans want to go even further to backstop hospitals and healthcare providers and fuel the sprint for vaccines. If Democrats will not let us, Americans will just have to cross our fingers and hope the medical system remains stable.

To be clear, Republicans are not proposing to "cut" any relief. Under current law, expanded UI expires and is replaced with nothing. Under current law, there are no more direct payments and no second PPP. Every single thing we put forward is a way to get more relief into people's hands.

Our Democratic colleagues want to pretend it is controversial, somehow, that taxpayers should not pay people more not to work than people who do go back to work. They want to pretend it is controversial that taxpayers should not pay people more not to work than people who do go back to work? The American people don't call it a controversy. They call it common sense. They call it basic fairness.

This is absolutely a time to be generous and provide additional Federal relief to people who have been laid off, but we should not be redistributing money away from the essential workers who have remained at their posts.

We should not be taxing somebody who has been stocking shelves for months so the government can pay their neighbor more than she makes to sit at home. That is what we are talking about—taxing essential workers to pay their neighbors a bonus to stay home.

One study by university economists just found these benefits can exceed people's previous incomes two-thirds of the time. They found a medium recipient earns 134 percent of their prior salary. That means half are making even more than that. That is just not fair. It is not compatible with a reopening economy and more than 6 in 10 Americans feel this creates a disincentive to work.

Even the Democratic House majority leader said just this morning that our perspective "has some validity to it and we have to deal with that . . . it's not \$600 or bust." That was the majority leader in the House. The Democratic majority leader in the House said: "It's not \$600 or bust." So let's get past these partisan cheap shots and have an adult conversation.

Look at it this way. Think about one street, one block in one neighborhood, anywhere in America. Think how they would benefit if this bill were signed into law. Right now, several families on that block probably have no idea whether their kids will be heading back to school in a few weeks. Our bill would provide the money and legal certainty for school districts to reopen safely.

Let's talk about the families' pocket-books. Likely, every mailbox on that street or each checking account would get another \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per dependent. For a family of four, we are talking about \$3,400 in cash. Maybe some of these homeowners are among

the millions of Americans who have been thrown into joblessness. As we discussed, they would get hundreds of dollars more every week in added unemployment.

But because we are doing it smarter, if anyone on the street owns a coffee shop or a contracting business, they will not hear from workers that they are earning more by staying at home. Those unemployed workers will get back on the job faster when our bill supercharges incentives for rehiring and helps pay for health and safety in the workplace.

Maybe some other people on the street have held onto their jobs because of the historic Paycheck Protection Program. Their employer is considering closing down with that relief nearly exhausted. Our targeted second round of PPP could keep their paycheck coming instead of a pink slip. Maybe a retired couple lives on this block. If our proposal for Medicare Part B premiums becomes law, this couple will be protected from a spike in costs due to this pandemic, and needless to say, every single person on that street would benefit from even stronger Federal investments in the diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines that will ultimately win this healthcare battle for all of us.

So, look, it is very simple. Partisan histrionics will not get any American family any of the relief I just described. Calling names will not get school districts one dime. Washington finger-pointing will not add 1 cent to anyone's unemployment check.

The Democrats face a simple choice. They can come to the table, work with the Republicans, and engage seriously to make law for the American people or they can stay on the sidelines, point fingers, and let another rescue package go the same way as the police reform bill they killed back in June. The Republicans are ready to govern. We just need the Democrats to decide whether they are serious about actually making law.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Cleveland Joseph, of Louisiana, to be United

States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, after putting the Senate on pause for 3 months and after months of blocking nearly every Democratic attempt to pass legislation related to the coronavirus, the Senate Republicans finally revealed their long overdue proposal for the next phase of COVID relief.

In my many years of serving in this Chamber, I have never seen a Republican majority—a Senate majority of any type—respond to a national emergency in such a disorganized and disoriented fashion. Weeks of infighting among Senate Republicans and the White House caused unnecessary and harmful delays.

Instead of presenting a single, unified bill, the Republicans released several separate drafts last night, and there might be more today. They can't agree on one bill. They can't get 51 votes for anything that is comprehensive and that deals with the very real problems the American people face. Even before the Republicans announced their bills, senior Republican Senators admitted they lacked the full support of the Republicans. Two Republican chairmen have said that probably half of the Republican Senate will vote against their own proposals. Worst of all, the Republican plan falls dreadfully short. It is ununified, unserious, and completely unsatisfactory.

My Republican friends, this is the greatest crisis America has faced in generations—100 years since the last health crisis of this magnitude, 75 years since the Great Depression—and you are paying attention to your corporate friends and not answering the needs of the people.

We Democrats want a real bill that answers people's needs, that deals with the serious problems we face. That is what we are fighting for. We will keep fighting for it, and our Republican friends are nowhere to be found.

While the Republican proposal fails to provide crucial relief for families, workers, and the unemployed, it is littered with corporate giveaways, K Street handouts, and Presidential pet projects. The Republican bill includes a \$20 billion slush fund for large agribusiness and tax breaks for three-martini lunches, but it doesn't provide a dime in food assistance for hungry kids. It includes an unprecedented, sweeping provision to shield corpora-

tions for 5 years from liability for negligent treatment of workers and consumers, but there is no new, sweeping provision to shield Americans from evictions or foreclosures.

It includes a \$30 billion wish list for defense contractors but no funding to make sure Americans can vote safely in November. There are reports that the Republican proposal may include a provision to lower capital standards at the Wall Street big banks but nothing to help State, local, and Tribal governments keep teachers, firefighters, and busdrivers on the job.

The Senate Republicans managed to sneak in nearly \$2 billion in taxpayer funds for a new FBI building, the location of which will increase the value of the Trump hotel and enrich the President and his family. Yes. In this proposal, the Senate Republicans reward the President and his family's business interests but not our essential workers.

Whom do my Republican friends need to help more—President Trump, who proudly claims he is a billionaire, or a worker who is about to lose his job, a small businessperson whose business is going under, or a family who can't feed hungry children? Who needs the help more—they or President Trump?

Perhaps, worst of all, in the middle of the pandemic, the Senate Republicans and the White House want to give out-of-work Americans a 30-percent pay cut. If you have lost your job through no fault of your own and you can't go back to work because the administration bungled this crisis, the Senate Republicans propose taking \$1,600 out of your pocket every single month.

Well, let me show my colleagues what New Yorkers think of the Republican proposal: Let them eat cake. GOP plan slices \$600 check and rejects aid to states. Let them eat cake. That is what New Yorkers think. That is what Americans think. Let them eat cake. Shame. Shame on our Republican friends.

The cover of the New York Daily News sums it up. Let them eat cake. "Let them eat cake" sums up the Republican proposal in response to the greatest economic crisis in 75 years. Let them eat cake.

People can't feed their kids. People are losing their homes, getting kicked out of their apartments. Small businesses are going under. The Republican response? Let them eat cake.

Who are the Republicans fighting for in this proposal? Tax breaks for three-martini lunches but no food assistance for the poor? Immunity for corporations but no immunity for Americans facing eviction? Twenty, thirty million unemployed Americans and Republicans say take a 30-percent pay cut? Who are the Republicans fighting for in this proposal?

If you are a big bank, a defense contractor, a member of the Trump family, the Republican proposal has some good news for you, but if you can barely afford the rent, can't find work, can't feed your kids, or are fighting for

your family's future, the Republican plan leaves you out in the cold.

The consequences of the Republican policy on unemployment alone would be disastrous. Those enhanced benefits have kept 12 million Americans out of poverty. Those enhanced benefits are the one bright spot in this declining economy—that consumer spending is going up now, in large part because of pandemic unemployment insurance as well as PPP.

One of the few things that has kept our economy from deteriorating further is that these unemployment benefits have boosted consumer spending. That is why economists say the Republican proposal could cost over 1 million jobs this year and 3.4 million jobs next year. The Republican proposal is causing us to lose even more jobs.

States have warned us that the Republican plan on unemployment is unworkable, to boot. We called State unemployment offices yesterday to ask them what would happen if the Republicans passed this new scheme. One State office simply said: Chaos. Chaos. Office after office said it would take weeks, months to even implement the new plan. What are people going to do during those weeks and months when they are not getting unemployment insurance?

The idea on the Republican side that we have to slash unemployment benefits because otherwise Americans won't go back to work is exaggerated. Americans want to work, are ready to work, and are desperate to get back to work. Such little faith in the American people. Such a bad outlook on human nature. People want to work, Republican friends; they just don't have jobs to do it, and we are not going to let them starve while that happens.

God forbid we provide tens of millions of unemployed Americans a lifeline until we defeat this disease and get our economy back on its feet seems to be the Republican attitude. The Republicans seem to think the American people are a bunch of loafers. Well, they are not.

Now, we Democrats want to get something done. We are certainly frustrated with the dithering, the disunity, and the lack of understanding of the depth of the crisis coming from the Republican side, but that will not stop us. We must press on with bipartisan negotiations. Time is running out. We cannot afford to fail. But the Republican new proposal is not an adequate starting point.

History is repeating itself. Each time we came together in the past to pass COVID 2, COVID 3, and COVID 3.5, it was because both parties sat down with each other and negotiated and did the hard work. But that was only after Republicans dared us and put an inadequate proposal on the floor and said: We will blame you. We held firm. They came back. We negotiated a much better bill. My hope, my belief, is that they will have to do that again.

Leader McCONNELL is in his "Alice in Wonderland" characterizations here on